THE
Important Queſtion
DISCUSSED;
Or, a SERIOUS and IMPARTIAL
ENQUIRY
INTO THE
True INTEREST of *ENGLAND*,
With Reſpect to the
CONTINENT.

Quapropter in adeundis periculis conſuetudo imitanda medicorum eſt, qui leviter ægrotantes leniter curant; gravioribus autem morbis periculoſas curationes & ancipites adhibere coguntur. Quare in tranquillo tempeſtatem adverſam optare, dementis eſt; ſubvenire autem tempeſtati quavis ratione, ſapientis.

CIC. de Offic. l. 1. c. 24.

LONDON:
Printed for M. COOPER, at the *Globe* in *Pater-noſter-Row*, MDCCXLVI.

[Price Sixpence.]

THE

Important Queſtion

DISCUSSED, &c.

OUR domeſtick troubles being at length happily driven into a remote corner of the Iſland, and our minds ſomewhat recovered from the late alarms, 'tis now time for the wiſdom of the Nation to conſider and determine, which way we are to turn next, and what Meaſures to purſue for the future? Whether it may be more expedient to disband part of thoſe land-forces, which are now ſwarming in the iſland, and to retrench the exceſſive expences which we have been at for ſome years paſt; or to reaſſume our former ſcheme of Politics, and punctually to fulfil our engagements with our allies upon the Continent? Whether it may be more conducive to the true intereſt of this Nation, to rely wholly upon that ſituation which disjoins it from the reſt of the world, to encreaſe its naval force, and to give its great application to the Marine, without concerning itſelf with the Intrigues of the neighbouring ſtates; or once more to cover Flanders with our troops, to negotiate, to fight, and to expend our treaſure, in reſtraining the over-grown power of France, and in preſerving the balance of power in Europe?

As the late urgent neceſſity of our own affairs made it expedient for us to recall the greateſt part of our forces

forces from abroad, ſo the preſent unanimity of the nation in ſupporting our domeſtic peace, together with the valour, good conduct, and Reputation of his Royal Highneſs the Duke, has once more put it into our power to purſue either of the abovementioned ſchemes, as ſhall be deemed moſt advantageous to the common-wealth; and may the good Genius of England inſpire and aſſiſt the public councils upon this important deliberation!

I know there are multitudes of people ready, with an air of confidence, to ask upon this occaſion, what has this Kingdom at all to do with the Continent? Imperial, independant, ſelf-ſufficient, ſeparated by nature from all the reſt of the world, why ſhould we buſy ourſelves with the affairs of other nations, and by interpoſing in their quarrels make ourſelves parties in matters, which very little, if at all, concern us? In ſhort, what relation to, what connection has this iſland with the Terra Firma?

I have not the preſumption to think, that any thing, I ſhall offer to the publick, will be deciſive upon a queſtion, which puzzles, or ſeems at leaſt to puzzle, the moſt able politicians in the nation. However, as a free-born Engliſhman, as one truly affected with whatever may relate to the good of his country, I ſhall venture to expreſs my impartial ſentiments upon this point, and ſhall think myſelf extremely fortunate, if haply it may be in my power, to ſatisfy the Minds of ſome of my leſs-knowing countrymen, and to throw the leaſt degree of light upon a ſubject, which the wit of declaiming demagogues, rather than any obſcurity in the thing itſelf, has perplexed and darkened.

England then, in all enquiries of this kind, in all enquiries concerning its true intereſt, is not to be conſidered merely as it is in itſelf, but with all its circum-

circumſtances and adjuncts. We are not to regard it only as an Iſland abounding with all the neceſſaries and conveniencies of life, but as a trading Iſland; as an Iſland, which owes all its wealth, and conſequently all its power, and influence among the Kingdoms, to an extenſive commerce; and by this line are our Britiſh Politics to be ever ſquared. 'Tis our power and influence abroad, which ſupport and defend our national trade, whilſt commerce, in return, brings in that balance of wealth in our favour, which can alone beget and maintain the other two: take away but a ſingle link of this chain, and the whole ſyſtem, which hangs upon it, immediately falls to the ground and is deſtroyed.

'Tis *Trade* then which builds the bridge, as it were, croſs the narrow ſeas, which firmly connects this Iſland with the Continent, and makes it abſolutely neceſſary for us to concern ourſelves with the affairs of our neighbours, of thoſe nations more eſpecially with whom we traffic, and from whoſe various wants we draw thoſe ſure returns of wealth, which both ſupport our credit abroad, and are the beſt ſecurity of our own internal peace and happineſs. For, were we to trade only with ourſelves, or with our own Colonies, the utmoſt we could pretend to, would be to transfer the neceſſaries, or perhaps the luxuries of life, from one part of the country to another, without making the leaſt addition to the national riches; ſuch a kind of commerce is indeed no more than paying with the one hand, and receiving with the other.

I lay it down therefore as a ſelf-evident maxim, that the proſperity of our national trade depends entirely upon our foreign cuſtom, and the quickneſs of our commercial returns with other countries; and conſequently, that whatever tends to deprive us of this cuſtom, or to exclude us from the neceſſary markets

markets wherein to diſpoſe of our commodities, ſo far ruins our trade, dries up that ſureſt fountain of our wealth, and deſtroys our influence and power abroad.

Suppoſe then, *in the firſt Place*, that the Sea-Coaſts of Holland, Flanders, Portugal, Genoa and Tuſcany, were in the hands of our enemies, what would be the undoubted conſequences of ſuch an event with regard to this nation? the ſuppoſition is at leaſt poſſible, and therefore there can be no abſurdity in arguing from it. We will, *ſecondly*, examine, what probability there may be, that thus it will really happen, that theſe coaſts will actually fall into the hands of our enemies, upon ſuppoſition of the neutrality of England with reſpect to the continent; or, what comes to much the ſame thing, upon ſuppoſition that England acts only with its fleet, and its negotiations, in defence of its allies upon the continent.

Upon the former of theſe ſuppoſitions then, it would unavoidably and immediately follow, that the amicable, and convenient ports of Holland would be no more open to receive us, and that the Dutch Trade would fail in all its ſeveral branches; Flanders would take off no more of our woollen-goods, and that beneficial commerce, which has ſubſiſted for ſo many ages between England and the Netherlands, would be now abſolutely at an end: the friendly Portugueſe would no longer have it in their power to exchange the rich product of the Brazils for our Britiſh Manufactures, whilſt our returns from the Mediterranean would become precarious, uncertain, and hardly worth our looking after; nor would even Gibraltar and Mahon anſwer the great expence of their fortifications, and garriſons. Such then would be the natural and neceſſary conſequence, ſuppoſing only a bare prohibition of trade with the abovementioned countries, that there were

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no fleets we needſt and in any awe of, no privateers to interrupt our navigation, and to raiſe the value of convoys, inſurance, &c, this then is the moſt favourable ſuppoſition we can make for England, and yet who ſees not, who is there but muſt acknowledge, that even in this caſe, within the compaſs of a very few years, our ruin would be certain and inevitable?

'Tis true, a kind of Turky or Levant-Trade would be ſtill left us to ſubſiſt upon; nor would the African, the Eaſt and Weſt-Indian, or our Northern Traffic preſently fail us-----but would theſe poor remains of our former commerce be ſufficient to maintain the honour and independence, the preſent dignity and ſplendor of the Engliſh name? Would they be able to ſupport thoſe numerous armaments by ſea, which are to ſtrike terror and conſternation into all the reſt of the world? I am afraid not! For if it be made a queſtion, even in our preſent ſituation, whether the *Turky-Trade*, for inſtance, be of any very great advantage to the nation; whether the balance of our returns from that country be much in our favour; ſurely the matter will be put quite out of all doubt, when the additional delays and expence of convoys, inſurance, &c, be taken into the account; when the continual riſques of Neapolitan, Italian, Spaniſh and French privateers are computed; when expoſed to winds and tempeſts there are no friendly harbours left for our ſhips to put into, throughout the whole navigation, but Mahon and Gibraltar.

The *African trade* is, at preſent, extremely beneficial to this nation, as it furniſhes ſlaves for our American plantations, which could not ſo eaſily, or ſo cheaply be carried on, without ſuch kind of workmen. The Drugs, Gums, Ivory, &c, of that country are ſo far really advantageous to the Public, as they

they are taken in exchange for our own commodities, and bring an addition of wealth into the land by a re-exportation of them. For as to that part of them, which we may conſume upon ourſelves, however it contribute to the luxury, it will make but a very poor acceſſion to the national riches. No! 'tis our vending theſe, and ſuch-like foreign commodities, again; 'tis our making a profit of the work of our ſlaves, by ſelling the fruits of their labour, in Sugar, Tobacco, &c, to the other States of Europe, which turns the balance of commerce in our favour, and goes on continually increaſing the national ſtock.-----But, upon our preſent ſuppoſition, that the coaſts of Holland, &c, were in our enemy's hands, or, in other words, in the hands of France, our beſt markets would be all intirely ſhut up from us, and our old and conſtant cuſtomers, however willing they might be, would not even have it in their power, to lay out a ſingle penny with us.---Our Goods, therefore, of all kinds, would lie rotting in our warehouſes, for want of people to take them off our hands; and, even in the ſtricteſt ſenſe of the words, we ſhould have nothing more than our labour for all our induſtry, ſkill, and expence.

The ſame obſervations, likewiſe, will eaſily demonſtrate, that, in the circumſtances abovementioned, our *Eaſt-Indian* Trade muſt ſoon be ruined, or at leaſt greatly reduced from what it now is. For were we to import no other, or no more of the commodities of thoſe diſtant countries, than what we ſpent upon ourſelves, to gratify our own palates, or to furniſh our own houſes, ſo far would this traffic be from redounding to the advantage of England, that it would ſoon be found extremely ruinous and detrimental to its true intereſt. For, as I have been well-informed, the balance upon the firſt exchange with

with the Natives of the Eaſt is really againſt us. Nothing, therefore, but a re-exportation of ſome part of our Indian goods, and making money of them that way, can reimburſe the nation its original expences. 'Tis this alone then, which makes this branch of our commerce beneficial to the Public, as well as to thoſe private perſons who are more immediately concerned in carrying it on.

As to our *Trade with the northern ſtates of Europe*, for Iron, Timber, Hemp, Tar, &c, however neceſſary it may be to anſwer the continual demands of our ſhipping, yet is the balance upon theſe articles, I believe, confeſſedly againſt us at preſent----how much more then, when we come to ſwell the bill with the extraordinary charge of convoys, inſurance, and other ſuch-like accidents?

'Tis true, every branch of our navigation, tho' it turns to no other account, is ſo far advantageous to the Nation, as it finds conſtant employment for our ſeamen, and becomes a nurſery, upon occaſion, for the royal navy. 'Tis this is the great benefit of our preſent *Coaſting-trade* at home, and one extraordinary advantage, which the kingdom reaps from its commerce with the *Weſt-Indian plantations*. But will a number of ſeamen alone, however great we may ſuppoſe it, without being employed in a lucrative foreign trade, add to the riches of the nation, or ſupport the great and neceſſary expences of government?---Did not, therefore, our Weſt-indian plantations produce ſomewhat more than was ſpent amongſt our own people, or conſumed in the family, as I may properly enough call it, they would make but a very ſmall addition, either of wealth or power to their Mother-Country. They might, indeed, prevent large ſums of money from being carried out of the kingdom in payment for ſuch things as luxury

has now rendered almoſt neceſſary to life, but would bring none into it. 'Tis, therefore, the exporting the ſuperfluities of thoſe regions (tobacco, ſugar, fiſh, &c) as well as our own, 'tis diſpoſing of them among our neighbours and turning the balance into caſh, which alone gives riches and power to the community, and makes the number of our ſeamen a real gain to the Public, as well as a ſtrength and bulwark to defend it. But if it be trade only which begets, as well as maintains ſeamen, I believe I may venture ſafely enough to aſſert, that we ſhall never be over burthened with this uſeful ſet of men, when once our European commerce begins to decline.

In a word, the good providence of God hath bleſſed this iſland with an abundance of all things neceſſary for the preſervation, convenience, and even pleaſures of life, whilſt the art and induſtry of its inhabitants have ſo far increaſed and perfected, if I may ſay ſo, its natural ſtores, that we have not only ſufficient Corn, Cloth, &c, to ſerve our own wants, but likewiſe to anſwer the great demands of thoſe other countries, where Nature has been more ſparing of her favours, and the mechanic arts have not been cultivated with ſo great ſucceſs. 'Tis the ſale of this ſuperfluity to Foreigners, the product of our own induſtry, labour, and ſkill, which turns to a national account, either as it directly brings us home money in payment, or is exchanged for other Commodities, which re-exported return at laſt to their mother-country in large tributes of that ſhining Ore, which, as the world goes, is credit, power, every thing.

Give me leave then once more to repeat my former queſtion, upon the preſent ſuppoſition, where ſhall we find markets to vend theſe ſuperfluities, or cuſtomers to take them off our hands? We are unhappily

happily excluded the Ports of Holland, Flanders, France, Portugal, Spain, and Italy! will not ſuch excluſion neceſſarily bring on an immediate reduction of our exportations? and what will be the certain conſequence of ſuch reduction? our trading veſſels will lie mouldering in our harbours for want of employment; our ſeamen will betake themſelves to ſome more gainful profeſſion for a livelihood; our natural as well as artificial commodities, our corn, cattle, cloth, &c, will be thrown upon our hands, becauſe there will be no body permitted to buy them of us; ſo that the value of theſe goods, even for home conſumption, will ſink almoſt to nothing; our numerous poor will want work, our tenants will not be able to pay their rents, money will become ſcarce, and at an exceſſive intereſt, whilſt the price of land will be inconceivably reduced.

How then ſhall the Royal Navy, the pride, and glory, and immediate bulwark of this nation, be maintained? we can never have leſs than two hundred ſhips of war, great and ſmall, in commiſſion, as well to ſecure our remaining trade, as to defend our extended coaſts, and annoy our vigilant enemies. But how ſhall this numerous fleet be ſupported, when that great branch of the public revenue, which ariſes from impoſts, cuſtoms, &c, begins to fail, as fail it neceſſarily muſt, upon a defect of our importations, and when the greateſt part of Europe will be precluded trading with us? will the land alone be able to bear the heavy load of the public expence? impoſſible ſuppoſition! the landed and trading intereſts are naturally and inſeparably connected, and ought never to be divided, even in imagination; the value of land will always be found to be higher or lower in proportion to the increaſe or failure of commerce--- Nay, even that multitude of its people, which is indeed

deed the ſtrength and glory, and riches of a nation, whilſt they can all be employ'd, without trade becomes a ſore and intolerable burthen to it.

I know it has been frequently aſſerted, that a ſea-war, eſpecially with France, if vigorouſly purſued, will always be able to maintain itſelf, with a very little additional expence to the public.----I dare not charge the gentlemen, who are ſo fond of ſpreading this Doctrine, with inſincerity; but ſure I am, there is not the leaſt appearance of a foundation to ſupport it. For is this the caſe at preſent? do the rich captures, we are every day making upon the French and Spaniards, contribute in the leaſt to the diminution of the national charge of the war? Private perſons, I grant, have already gotten, and, 'tis probable, in the courſe of a long war, will be ſtill getting, immenſe wealth; but of what advantage is all this to the Public, as ſuch? have we already, or are we likely to have, a ſingle tax the leſs for all our captures? ---- But I may go ſtill farther, and venture to aſſert, that upon the preſent ſuppoſition, our very prizes (unleſs they always conſiſted of coin or bullion) would be a detriment to the Public: they would be a manifeſt detriment to the Public, as we ſhould not be able to diſpoſe of their bulk abroad; and conſequently to make uſe of them at home, at the ſame time that it would over-ſtock our markets, would leſſen the conſumption, and ſink the value of our own commodities.

In ſhort, 'tis a conſtant and copious exportation of our own Goods and Manufactures, an extenſive foreign trade, a free and open market with as many people as poſſible, which are the Royal Golden-Mines, and conſtitute the great riches of this Nation: 'tis this which employs our Poor, enhances the price of our Land, enables us both eaſily and chearfully to

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pay our taxes, ſupports our fleets and armies, gives us power at home, and encreaſes our influence abroad, puts the Balance of Europe into our hands, and makes the Engliſh name courted, and reſpected, in almoſt every kingdom of the known world. Whatever therefore tends to diminiſh this advantageous commerce, and to ruin our trade with the other nations of Europe, is ſo far deſtructive of the happineſs, of the true intereſt of England: but this muſt be the unavoidable and neceſſary effect of a prohibition of trade with Holland, Flanders, France, Spain, Portugal, and Italy: the conſequence therefore of theſe countries being in the poſſeſſion, or under the influence of our enemies, is too plain not to be foreſeen, and too fatal not to be dreaded, not to be vigorouſly oppoſed by every real friend of his country.

Hitherto I have argued upon the ſuppoſition, that we were ſtill to continue maſters of the ſea, that there was no power who would even attempt to diſpute this important province with us, and that we had nothing to fear upon this head from France and her Allies. If then the hazard to England be ſo great, even upon this moſt favourable review of the caſe; how is its danger magnified, and with what ſhocking circumſtances attended, when we turn the perſpective, and view the face of things, as in all probability it will appear within the compaſs of a very few years? when we ſhall ſee a ſuperior fleet riding in our channel, commanding the narrow ſeas, and menacing our trembling ſhores on every ſide; when every breath of wind from the eaſt ſhall put us into a Panic, for every thing that is dear and valuable to us. If this proſpect frightens, let it at the ſame time animate us with courage and reſolution to oppoſe the firſt beginnings of ſo leading and fatal a miſchief; that man, I am ſure, has very little true

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regard for the Religion, honour, independance, and ſafety of his country, who would not ſacrifice his laſt penny, rather than expoſe it to ſo imminent a danger.

'Tis granted, France is by no means our match by ſea at preſent, nor are its numerous land-armies immediately formidable to England united within itſelf, whilſt its naval force continues in the dejected ſtate it now is! but how long will this be the caſe, upon our preſent ſuppoſition? too ſhort a time, I doubt, for the happineſs and independance of this Realm! for when once the ports of Holland, with all their conveniencies for building, manning, and equipping a fleet, are in the diſpoſition of our enemies, what acceſſions may they not be every day making to their royal navy? their ſhips of war will be continually encreaſing, in ſpite of all our efforts to prevent them, and every hour will add to our danger. For what has not this country to fear, when the skill, induſtry and patience of Holland, ſhall be united with the ſpirit and activity of France?

If Lewis XIV under all imaginable diſadvantages, alone, ſurrounded with enemies on every ſide, envied and ſuſpected by the Spaniard, feared by the Dutch, at war with the Empire, was nevertheleſs able to create, as it were, a fleet, which made the conjoined ſquadrons of both England and Holland tremble---what mighty things may not the miniſtry of Lewis XV effect, when it has no diverſion of any conſequence to ſtand in awe of from the Continent, Spain in alliance, the Netherlands ſubdued, the Empire exhauſted, the rich mines of Peru at their diſpoſal, the magazines and ſeamen of Holland at their command? the infinite reſources in the country itſelf, its great fertility and convenient ſituation for naval dominion, the nature of its preſent Conſtitution, the great multitude of its people, the ready obedience of all

all to the commands of their prince, the high idea which every man conceives of the glory and honour of his country, muſt render France ever terrible to its neighbours, whether it ſtill continues to apply itſelf, as it has hitherto chiefly done, to make conqueſts upon the continent, or, as is moſt probable, ſhould at length turn its great ſtudy and attention to the forming and completing its marine.

'Tis true, whilſt we continued maſters of the ſea, we ſhould be able greatly to interrupt the French commerce, and by that means ſhould in ſome meaſure cut off that copious fountain of their wealth, which has hitherto contributed ſo largely to the ſupport of their numerous armies. This, I grant, would greatly diſtreſs them for a ſeaſon, tho' I am far from being ſanguine enough to imagine with too many of my countrymen, that it would entirely ruin them. For whilſt there is a ſingle penny circulating in his country, the French King may command it, and, if he wills ſo, muſt have it. 'Tis this then that gives him that exorbitant power, and renders him ſo truly formidable to all his neighbours--that he has nothing to conſult in laying taxes, but his own ambition, that he is always ſure of money to carry on both his military and corrupting ſchemes, if there be any to be had in his kingdom. His ſubjects, indeed, may inwardly murmur, may groan under the weight of theſe grievous impoſitions; but, ſuch is their unhappy ſituation, they muſt nevertheleſs pay them. It was this plenitude of his power, which enabled old Lewis to bring ſuch formidable armies into the field, even to the laſt, when royal Navy he had none, when the national Trade was reduced to almoſt nothing, when an immenſe Debt had overwhelmed the public credit, and a long and unſucceſsful war with

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all his neighbours, had cut off the flower of his country.

'Tis in vain therefore, 'tis abſolutely contrary to experience to imagine, that we ſhall be ever able to put a ſtop to the progreſs of the French arms upon the continent, merely by interrupting their commerce by ſea. The utmoſt we can this way pretend to, will be to prejudice their trade for a time; for totally to ruin it, I am afraid, will never be in our power, unleſs, in the moſt literal ſenſe of the word, we were able to cover the Ocean with our veſſels. Their Merchantmen, under ſmall convoys, or even without any, will be continually ſlipping backwards and forwards from one port to another, in ſpite of all we can do to prevent them, whilſt ſometimes a South-ſea, ſometimes a Regiſter-ſhip with its rich freight, ſafely arrived at Breſt or Cadiz, will enable them to maintain their armies, and carry their all-conquering ſchemes into execution.

However, that we may entirely deprive our *Themiſtocleans*, ſuch amongſt us as are for truſting only to our *wooden walls* for our ſecurity, of all poſſible room for farther cavil and objection, we will go one ſtep farther yet; we will even ſuppoſe, that the French will not for ſome time after they are in poſſeſſion of Holland, &c, particularly apply themſelves to the augmentation of their Navy; that, ſtill engaged with their neighbours upon the Terra-firma, they will wholly leave the guard of their Coaſts and Trade to their numerous Privateers, and to a few men of war only, whoſe number they will take care to encreaſe from time to time, as occaſion offers,--- yet how long ſhall we be able to maintain the ſovereignty of the ſeas, even without an enemy who will dare to come to an open engagement with us! Our very ſtrength will deſtroy us, and we muſt inevitably

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ſink under the weight of our own power. For, to preſerve our Trade in the Weſt-Indies from Spaniſh, French, and Dutch Privateers and Frigates, to defend our colonies from the formidable enemy at their back, we muſt have a conſtant and numerous fleet in thoſe parts. We muſt be continually ſending ſtrong convoys, with all ſorts of neceſſaries for our ſhips and forces in thoſe countries. We muſt have another conſiderable navy continually riding in the Mediterranean, as well to protect our Levant-trade and to cover Mahón and Gibraltar, as to diſtreſs and annoy our enemies. Other ſhips of force we muſt have upon the coaſt of Africa, and in the Eaſt-Indies; while ſtill more numerous fleets muſt be left at home to quiet the apprehenſions of the people, and to defend our own ſhores, with thoſe of Scotland and Ireland, from the perpetual Inſults of our inſolent neighbours. May it not then be fairly asked, how are all theſe ſhips to be maintained, and where ſhall we create Funds ſufficient to pay ſuch a numerous army of ſeamen, and to anſwer all other the prodigious demands of ſo mighty a Navy?

If it be ſuggeſted, as it has been ſometimes done, that our land-forces with all their appendages, that our Penſions and Subſidies to foreign Princes, are little leſs than unneceſſary to the ſervice of the kingdom, and that this whole expence may be ſafely converted to the ſole uſe of the fleet---to this it may be replied, that the ſuggeſtion itſelf is fundamentally wrong; for in the firſt place it ſuppoſes that when all the Ports of Holland, Flanders, Portugal, &c, are in the hands of our enemies, and a trade with them abſolutely prohibited, we ſhall ſtill be able to raiſe as much money upon the Publick, as we do at preſent; but this there is no thinking perſon but will acknowledge to be abſolutely impoſſible. For the interrup-

tion, or ruin rather, of our European-trade, at the ſame time that it neceſſarily drags along with it a great part of the public Revenue, will cauſe likewiſe a fall in the value of our lands; and conſequently thoſe two plentiful reſources of our preſent wealth and credit will be then wholly cut off, or at leaſt extreamly diminiſhed. Secondly, it ſuppoſes, that tho' there be ſcarcely a fortified town or caſtle in the whole country, tho' our Metropolis itſelf be without walls, and defenceleſs, yet that there is not the leaſt need of any ſtanding army, or regular-forces to guard and protect this Iſland--But this ſuggeſtion let our late violent hurries and conſternation, our late frights and pannics anſwer.

Thus then muſt it neceſſarily happen, ſuch will be the terrible ſituation of this iſland, whenever the ports of Holland, Flanders, &c, ſhall be either in the hands of France, or under the influence and direction of that implacable enemy----the inevitable ruin of our trade, and ſpeedy deſtruction of our civil and religious liberties. But, we thank Almighty God, things are not yet reduced to this deſperate ſtate, tho the grand Criſis ſeems not to be far off. The fatal impending ſtroke may be perhaps yet averted, if we ſeize the preſent favourable opportunity of joining with our Allies, who invoke our aſſiſtance, and, in ſtrict union with them, act with that vigor and unanimity which the importance of the occaſion demands. The great End we are to aim at, the meaſure we are ever ſteadily to purſue, is to prevent the abovementioned countries from falling into the power of the houſe of Bourbon. Our proſperity, our very exiſtence as a free, independent and proteſtant nation, depends upon this ſingle point; there is no thinking man but ſees this, and no ſincere friend of his country

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but acknowledges it, and is for taking every ſtep to prevent it.

The only queſtion therefore before us at preſent is, how this great point may moſt certainly be brought to a happy concluſion? whether it may be beſt effected by breaking at once all our treaties with our Allies upon the Continent, by encreaſing our Navy, and turning our whole thoughts as well as revenue, towards maintaining the ſuperiority of our Fleet; or by ſteadily perſiſting in thoſe meaſures, which both we, and the wiſdom of our forefathers, have purſued for more than theſe two ages paſt, and, in ſtrict conjunction with our Allies, acting vigorouſly againſt the common enemy by land, as well as ſea? If indeed it could clearly be made appear, that our Allies were ſufficiently provided to take care of themſelves; that they were a match for the houſe of Bourbon, and well able to defend their own territories, without the aſſiſtance of men and money from us--then perhaps it might not be inexpedient to follow that ſcheme of conduct which might be moſt ſaving of the treaſure of the nation----but if the contrary be evident; if it be moſt evident that the Dutch, for inſtance, are by no means able to withſtand the French, either alone or joined with any ſuccours they may have reaſon to expect from their neighbours on the continent; the conſequence is then indiſputable, is indeed ſelf-evident, that we muſt either aſſiſt them in that way in which only we can give them the neceſſary aſſiſtance, (that is, by land) or we muſt periſh with them---the alternative is certain.

Let me then aſk the moſt ſanguine of our *Themiſtocleans*, how long they think Holland, oppreſſed as it is with Debts, its Treaſury exhauſted, its Trade upon the whole declining, its Fleet out of repair, divided into factions, and, from the nature of its civil

civil conſtitution, perpetually expoſed to the undermining attacks of French gold--how long they imagine the United-Provinces, in this diſtreſsful ſituation, will be able to withſtand the numerous and approaching armies of France? their own forces, moſt confeſſedly, are abſolutely unequal to the arduous taſk----But may they not hire as many troops as are neceſſary from their neighbours on the other ſide of the Rhine, who are always ready enough to diſpoſe of their ſubjects upon ſuch occaſions?----But how will it be poſſible for them, alone and unſupported, to find all the neceſſary ſums, as well to anſwer their own preſſing demands, as to evade the intrigues of their potent enemy? at beſt, how ſlow are the motions, and what difficulties generally attend the march, the recruiting, and the command of ſuch ſort of mercenaries? But we will even ſuppoſe that the Dutch army was already joined with thirty or forty thouſand Auſtrians, Germans, &c, and that their whole number amounted to eighty thouſand effective men----yet what could even ſuch an army do at this important criſis? Would it be able to meet an hundred thouſand French in the field, and at the ſame time to cover towns, ſecure garriſons, &c? Such an army, it is true, if it could be got together, and got together in time, (which I believe will be ſomewhat difficult, conſidering the low eſtate of the imperial Finances) might delay matters, might defer the fate of Holland for a little while, but could not poſſibly ſtop the continual progreſs of the French arms, and ſave it from being ſwallowed up at laſt. In ſhort, upon ſuppoſition of the Neutrality of England, and for England not to act by land as well as by ſea in defence of its allies upon the Continent is really to be neutral; I ſay, upon ſuppoſition of the Neutrality of England,

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Holland in all probability would be reduced under the French yoke in two, or three, Campaigns at fartheſt. If our ſuperior fleet was not able to ſave even Oſtend from theſe conquerors, ſurely it will be ſtill of leſs ſervice in protecting the inland towns of the Low-Countries----Nor could any diverſion we might be able to make by attacking the French Sea-Coaſts be of the leaſt advantage to our allies, or give any great interruption to the ſchemes of the grand enemy; as theſe towns are always well prepared againſt any ſudden invaſion, and require but a ſmall proportion of forces to defend them.

I muſt therefore lay it down as an undoubted fact, nor can it be too much inſiſted upon in the preſent conjuncture, that the Dutch are not able to defend themſelves by their own ſtrength; that, whether the Empire be at peace or war with France, the ſuccours, which may reaſonably be expected from thence for the ſervice of the Low-Countries, will not be ſufficient to ſave them, and conſequently, that nothing but our ſending a good body of land forces from England, or, what comes to much the ſame thing, taking a proper number of foreign forces into our own pay, and acting vigorouſly in conjunction with our allies will be able to do it; and happy will it be for both nations, if this meaſure be found effectual.

I repeat it again, *acting vigorouſly in conjunction with our Allies*; for without them, unleſs they likewiſe will heartily concur with us, and exert their whole power, our utmoſt efforts will be vain and ineffectual to ſave them, they muſt neceſſarily periſh, and, however fatal the conſequence may be to ourſelves, we muſt ſtand by and ſee it. For no Adminiſtration will be ever able to vindicate its conduct to the nation for waſting its blood and treaſure

ſure in defence of its neighbours, unleſs there be ſome proſpect of ſucceeding in the glorious attempt, which there cannot be, if we are deſerted and left to act alone. England, Holland, and the Empire! what can they not do, whilſt they continue united! to what affrighting dangers are they not, each in their turn, expoſed, whenever they ſuffer envy, jealouſy, diſtruſt, and mutual ſuſpicion to divide and weaken them!

'Tis, indeed, extremely unfortunate to be placed in ſuch a troubleſome ſituation, where our national happineſs ſo intimately depends upon that of other people; but whilſt we are a trading nation, thus it muſt neceſſarily be; our Cuſtomers are our ſtrength and ſupport; reduce them therefore to ſuch a ſtate of weakneſs and dependence as no longer to have it in their power to lay out their money with us, and we muſt ſink of courſe; what therefore we cannot prevent, 'tis our duty to make the beſt of----If my neighbour's unkindneſs, or ungratitude, or miſconduct, will not let me ſave him for his own ſake, ſelf-intereſt muſt make me endeavour at leaſt to ſave him for my own. If we are reſolved to defend the town to the utmoſt, we muſt take care to preſerve the outworks as long as poſſible. What then the Auſtrian Netherlands are to Holland, that is Holland to England, its bulwark and barrier, and conſequently we are very little leſs concerned in its defence, than the Dutch themſelves are----*more concerned* we neither are, nor can be; and therefore 'tis highly unreaſonable in our neighbours, if they expect that we ſhould continue to do more for them, than they ſeem willing to do for themſelves: whilſt we are ready to meet them half way, and heartily to join with them in carrying on the common cauſe---this is the utmoſt they ought to require

of

of us, and is indeed encouragement ſufficient for them to put an end to that temporizing conduct, which they have ſo long purſued, and enter upon the moſt vigorous meaſures as well for their preſent as future ſecurity againſt the open and inſidious attacks of their inveterate enemy.

If we now proceed to conſider the political condition of the other ſtates of Europe, it will be no difficult matter to demonſtrate in the firſt place the utter impoſſibility there is, that the King of Sardinia, or thoſe other Eſtates of Italy, which belong to the Emperor, or the Houſe of Auſtria, ſhould be ever able to withſtand the power of France, Spain, and Naples, upon ſuppoſition that England was once come to a reſolution to act with its Fleet only in their defence. For if thoſe countries are at preſent in ſo eminent a hazard of ſinking under the weight, oppreſſed, as they are, by the different branches of the Houſe of Bourbon, how much more terrible will be their ſituation, when there is no farther diverſion to be hoped for in Flanders to call off part of the French forces, and no more money to be expected from England to give life and ſpirit to the diſtreſſed and exhauſted natives? He that knows any thing of the matter will readily acknowledge, that, in theſe circumſtances, the conqueſt of Italy would ſcarcely be more than the buſineſs of a ſingle campaign. This well deſerves the moſt ſerious conſideration both of the Swiſs, and the Venetians.

'Tis true, Italy was formerly remarkable for being fatal to the armies of France, ſo that it has been emphatically ſtiled by ſome Hiſtorians, their Grave. But the conqueſt of this country will be much more eaſily executed in the preſent ſituation of their affairs, backed as they are by Naples, and ſupported by the whole power of Spain---and will

will our fleets be able to prevent the Spaniard from ſending continual ſupplies to his forces in Italy by ſea? with all our skill and vigilance we have not hitherto been able to effect even thus much: or will they be ſufficient to prevent numerous armies from perpetually marching into it over land? will it keep off the ſiege or bombardment of Turin?---we have indeed a noble navy, nor is it, I believe, more than truth to aſſert, that the royal fleet of England would be a match for all the reſt of Europe together, could it fairly engage with their conjoined ſquadrons in the open ſeas. But let us not expect impoſſibilities from our ſhips, let us not vainly expect them to ſail and act upon dry land, or to command the winds and ſeaſons.

We have no trade at preſent, which turns to a greater national account, than that which is carried on with Portugal. 'Tis our undoubted intereſt, therefore, to watch over their independance, to warn them of future dangers, to take every meaſure for their ſecurity, and to maintain their crown, as 'tis at preſent ſettled, in the Braganza family. But who is ſo weak as to imagine, that after the Spaniards have once finſhed their conqueſts in Italy, they will not renew their ancient and repeated pretenſions to this kingdom? and how long will Portugal, if left to its own ſtrength only, be able to hold out againſt the united forces of France and Spain, or even againſt the arms of Spain alone if it acts with its whole vigour? yet this muſt be the caſe, they muſt be left to their own ſtrength only; for where ſhall they procure the neceſſary ſuccours? Holland and Italy are by this time no more; and as to England, its new ſcheme of acting by ſea only, ſhould it ever be embraced, will not permit it to ſend forty thouſand land-men to their aſſiſtance---and yet we

we may depend upon it, that the fleet which was not able to defend Oſtend, will be as little available in preſerving Liſbon from the hands of its enemies. Portugal therefore, like all the reſt of its neighbours, muſt ſoon be reduced to beg for terms, and yield to the ſuperior power of the Houſe of Bourbon.

I have hitherto taken but little notice of the German-Empire, in examination of the ſeveral points before me: not for want of any reſpect to that auguſt body, but becauſe I really look upon it as utterly unable of itſelf to prevent the conqueſt of Holland, Italy, or Portugal. I grant indeed, whilſt the whole Empire, whilſt the ſeveral members of that huge diſproportioned body continue firmly united under one head, and may be perſuaded to act againſt the general enemy with one heart and hand, as there is reaſon to hope it may in the preſent juncture, much, very much, may be expected from the German valour and military experience in favour of the liberties of Europe, if properly ſupported. For valour and experience alone are not ſufficient to maintain the common cauſe, where the nerves of war are weak and defective---We will ſuppoſe then that the Empire had determined to attack France on the ſide of Alſace with all its force---but where ſhall it find money to put the active reſolutions of its Diet into execution, and to ſupport ſo numerous an army, as ſuch an expedition will require? Trade there is but little in all that vaſt region, to promote a perpetual circulation of caſh, and fill the exchequers of its ſeveral princes: want of money therefore will be now, as it has likewiſe been for theſe many ages paſt, an invincible obſtacle to the military operations of the Germanic body.

'Tis probable indeed was Germany itſelf to be again attacked as we have frequently ſeen it of late,

the brave natives would even hazard their lives without pay, where their own liberty was ſo immediately concerned: but how would this contribute to the preſervation of Holland, and to the independance of the reſt of Europe?---He who thinks of invading a foreign country with ſucceſs, a country populous and firmly united in itſelf, muſt not only have treaſure enough to furniſh his ſoldiers with their continual ſubſiſtance, but to procure all the neceſſary intelligence, to erect magazines, to provide conſtant ſupplies of ammunition, and thoſe tenthouſand other things, which a large army is in perpetual need of. Where then ſhall the Empire procure the money requiſite for ſo great an undertaking? at home it cannot raiſe it; that is abſolutely impoſſible; and Holland is too much diſtreſſed to furniſh all the neceſſary ſums: recourſe therefore muſt be had to England; and how ought we to act in this caſe? are we calmly to ſee the good diſpoſitions of the Empire loſt for want of a little pecuniary aſſiſtance! there is no man, I hope, in the whole nation ſo very mean-ſpirited as to give this advice---in ſpite therefore of all their reſolutions to the contrary, even our *Themiſtocleans*, in this inſtance, would find themſelves under a ſort of neceſſity of breaking thro' their naval plan of operations, and of intermeddling in the affairs of the continent.

As to the more Northern Powers of Europe, they are too far removed from the ſcene of action, and think themſelves too little concerned in the preſent danger to act with that vigour and reſolution, which the common neceſſities of Europe require. Money, indeed, if plntifully beſtowed may do much with them, and perſuade them to almoſt any thing; the prince who bids higheſt may command their forces, or at leaſt their neutrality, without much regard paid

to

to the juſtice of his cauſe, or indeed to their own true intereſt. But in the preſent circumſtances of things, who ſhall hire this northern army? the Dutch will be too much engaged in their own neceſſary defence to be able to ſpare all the caſh requiſite for this purpoſe; nor will our new ſcheme of politics (ſhould it ever obtain) permit England to give penſions to their princes, or to take their troops into our pay---if it will, why all that clamour againſt former meaſures of this nature, and the unreaſonable outcry againſt the preſent plan of acting?---If indeed the Empire, as ſuch, ſhould be formally attacked by the Houſe of Bourbon, ſelf-preſervation, 'tis probable, may incline the Northern princes to ſend it ſome aſſiſtance, even upon the moſt eaſy terms; but unleſs this was to be the caſe, they will very little concern themſelves with what becomes of the reſt of Europe, any farther than mere weight of metal may be able to operate upon them---In general, people are but too well pleaſed to ſee their neighbours humbled, and their rivals in trade, or power, or influence, reduced a little lower, without conſidering (whilſt the danger is at ſome diſtance from them) how the event may in the end affect themſelves. 'Tis this ill-natured, or envious principle ſhall I call it? which has ſo effectually blinded the eyes of ſome of my own countrymen, and will have the ſame unhappy effect upon the more remote ſtates of Europe, whilſt they regard only the preſent, and neglect the true intereſt of their country.

I ſhould be extremely glad to be well convinced, that the power of France was not indeed ſo great, as it has been here repreſented; that ruined in its trade, exhauſted of men and money, neither Holland, England or the reſt of Europe, had any thing, as yet, to fear from its reſtleſs machinations. But this

this would be to cry peace, peace, where there was no peace; it would be lulling ourſelves into a fatal ſecurity, when the danger was really greateſt, and conſequently, however quietly we might ſit under ſuch a calm for a little while, the paroxyſm would ſoon return upon us with redoubled fury.---'Tis indiſputable, I think, that the power of France has never appeared greater, nor more formidable, than it has ſince the death of the late emperor Charles VI; becauſe never was it ſo firmly united with Spain before, as it has been ſince the furious clamour of a miſtaken and deceived people drove us into a war with this latter nation. From this remarkable Era may we truly date the beginning of our own calamities, as well as thoſe under which the reſt of Europe groans---We knew the Spaniards alone were not able to withſtand the power of England, therefore, right or wrong, we will make war with them !---no! for that very reaſon we will not make war with them, unleſs abſolute neceſſity reduces us to it, becauſe we ſhall by this means neceſſarily force them to throw themſelves, Carte blanche, into the arms of France for aſſiſtance, and conſequently by our own folly and raſhneſs effect that very meaſure for our moſt dangerous enemy, which all the policy, cunning, and even force of old Lewis could never thoroughly bring about.

'Tis this ſtrict Union then between France and Spain, which adds ſo much real Strength to the Houſe of Bourbon, and gives it a terror, which it never ſo completely had before. For what will not the inexhauſtible treaſures of the Indies do, when diſtributed by the moſt able politicians? They will not only maintain armies, but even blind the eyes of the wiſe againſt their own true intereſt, they will defend former acquiſitions, and purchaſe new ones, which could not otherwiſe be ſo eaſily conquered---nor will

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it ever be in our power (whatever ſome people may affect to think) however wiſely our ſhips of war may be ſtationed and diſtributed, to prevent large quantities of the all-powerful metal from being continually imported both into France and Spain.

The old Spaniards, it is probable, are not quite ſo well pleaſed to be thus unequally yoked with the French, but that they wiſh themſelves fairly got rid of their inſolent companions. They are too polite not to ſee, that this union between the two nations muſt terminate at length in their abſolute dependence upon that encroaching Power, which never lets ſlip any opportunity of fixing and eſtabliſhing its own authority----but what ſhall they do to help themſelves in the preſent exhauſted condition of their country, poor and half peopled?----nay, ſhould even their preſent king or queen die, and by that means furniſh them with a ſort of opportunity of attempting to ſhake off that abject dependence, which is every day encreaſing upon them, yet I don't ſee how they will be able to make a proper uſe of the conjuncture in reaſſerting their former liberty. Their own natural ſtrength, 'tis certain, is by no means ſufficient to enable them to throw off the French influence and dominion over them. To whom then ſhall they fly for relief? not to England, their old Friends and ſupport in time of danger and diſtreſs; becauſe we are at war with them; and, what is ſtill worſe, at war with them, I am afraid, we muſt ever be, whilſt we perſiſt in our Reſolution of not making any peace with them but upon the previous condition of no ſearch but in Port.----I do not ſo much inſiſt upon the mutual intermarriages between the two ſtates; but it wants no great political penetration to ſee, that whilſt Spain is at war with England, and Italy and Portugal remain unconquered,

France

France may be always ſure of commanding the Spaniſh councils, the Spaniſh treaſures, and the Spaniſh arms.

Still leſs reaſon have we to expect, that when once the King of Sardinia, and the Dutchy of Tuſcany ſhall be reduced, the Italian branches of the houſe of Bourbon ſhould ever attempt to reaſſume their liberty, and ſhake off the authority, which France is every day acquiring over them. If Don Philip ſhould gain an eſtabliſhment in Lombardy, nothing is more certain, than that both he and his brother of Naples muſt ever be dependent for ſupport upon the hand that made them kings. They would ſtand too much in awe of their new-conquered ſubjects to ſet up for themſelves; and as nothing but their ſtrict alliance with France would be able to ſecure their dominions, there is no queſtion to be made, but they would punctually purſue this meaſure.

The *Venetians*, indeed, may at length be brought to acknowledge the neceſſity of exerting themſelves in defence of the liberty of Italy; but vain will be their ſtrongeſt efforts, and very little good will they be able to do either themſelves or the common cauſe, if they defer engaging in the war, until their allies are all deſtroyed: and 'tis not unlikely, that even this wiſe republic, at leaſt its dominions upon the Terra Firma, may at length fall a ſacrifice to its caution, to its darling maxim of a neutrality, and of never interpoſing in the affairs of its neighbours. It is indeed extremely weak, and impolitic, to be always ſeeking expence and running ourſelves into dangers, where there is no neceſſity for it; but ſtill more imprudent, and abſurd is it to let the impending ruin come juſt to our own doors, before we begin to make uſe of our ſtrength to oppoſe it.

Such

Such then is the preſent ſituation of Europe, the Houſe of Bourbon every where encroaching upon its neighbours, ſtill adding town to town, and going on from ſtrength to ſtrength, whilſt the bordering ſtates, partly thro' their own inteſtine factions, and partly for want of men and money to carry their more vigorous reſolutions into execution, are every where obliged by little and little to retreat before them. Nothing then but the moſt vigorous interpoſition of England, at this juncture, is able to ſave Europe; and, give me leave once more to repeat it, very happy will it be for this nation, as well as for its allies, if ſuch interpoſition be found ſucceſsful!

In ſtrict conjunction with the ſtates upon the continent, we may indeed do much to ſtop this perpetual progreſs of the houſe of Bourbon, and reduce that overgrown power within ſuch bounds, as the ſafety of its neighbours may require; but without them we ſhall be able to effect very little, and even leſs, perhaps, can they do without us: there muſt be an unreſerved, a friendly and active union of all the parties concerned, if they expect that the advantages ariſing from the common confederacy ſhould be equal to the common danger. Let them remember by what means old Rome became empreſs of the world, and eſtabliſhed its dominion over ſo many ſtrong and powerful nations. One of its own hiſtorians has emphatically expreſſed it in a very few words; *dum pugnant ſinguli, univerſi vincuntur.*

That man then muſt be wilfully blind, who does not ſee all this: every body indeed does ſee it, and in ſome ſort acknowledge it---They acknowlege it, when they ſay, that 'tis for the intereſt of England not to ſuffer the houſe of Bourbon to become more powerful than it is, nor that any of our allies upon the continent be reduced under the yoke of France---

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The only difference therefore between Engliſhmen is, what are the moſt proper, the moſt effectual means to prevent the impending miſchief, which all ſeem ſo much to dread; for they that will the end, if they are ſincere in their pretenſions, muſt neceſſarily will the means.

Suppoſe then, in order to ſave the nation's money, we were to act with our fleet only in this conjuncture? how would this affect the French ſchemes upon the continent? will our fleet be able to protect Luxemburgh, Antwerp, or Philipſburgh? will the whole Royal Navy of England prevent Turin from being beſieged, and taken? impoſſible!---let us then add, (that we drive matters as near as poſſible) to our continual and ſtrongeſt efforts by ſea, (for theſe muſt never be intermitted) a few ſeaſonable ſubſidies to ſuch of our allies upon the Continent, as are moſt in want of pecuniary ſupplies. But even this meaſure, tho' ſomewhat more effectual than the former, would upon the experiment, I am afraid, be found not altogether ſufficient to anſwer the mighty purpoſes we ſhould expect from it. I am not now conſidering, and weighing nicely as in a pair of ſcales, whether we might not poſſibly ſave the nation two or three hundred thouſand pounds a year, if inſtead of ſending them a powerful army, we aſſiſted our allies with our fleet and money only. The difference on either ſide is a mere trifle, when our *all* is at ſtake---but what I chiefly inſiſt upon is, that this ſcheme in all probability would not anſwer the purpoſe it is intended for, that it would be neither ſo advantageous to ourſelves or allies, employing as many of our natinoal troops, as might conveniently be ſpared, and taking a proper number of foreign ones into our pay, and under our own direction. For the money which is voted in parliament for ſubſidies to foreign powers, may

may be beſtowed we know not how; ſome of it may ſtop at home for prompt payment, for freightage, for the expence of returning; more of it may fall to the ſhare of hungry indigent courtiers abroad, or be thrown away in magnificent ſhows, coronations, &c, and but a ſmall ſhare of it be left to be expended according to the original intention of the donors: whereas, by employing our own troops in the ſervice, whether national or hired, we have ſtronger aſſurance of the ſucceſs of their operations, all Europe is convinced that we are heartily concerned in the common cauſe, that we are reſolved to ſtand by our treaties, and in earneſt in defence of our allies. This again will give life and ſpirit to them in return, and they will all act with double confidence and vigour, when they are aſſured of being ſo powerfully ſupported---and, what cannot be too much regarded, we ſhall by this means keep equal pace with our neighbours in the art of war, and have an army of well diſciplined and veteran ſoldiers with experienced officers, and generals at their head, if we ſhould again, as at preſent, have a more immediate call for them ourſelves at home.

In ſhort, the danger is now become too great and preſſing, as well as too near us, to be gazed upon with indifference, or to be lightly ſported with---- The grand criſis ſeems not to be far off, and conſequently this is no time for trying new experiments. Were we to temporize, and act with half our ſtrength only in this perilous conjuncture, that half would moſt indiſputably be thrown away, and at the year's end we ſhould certainly be found to have exhauſted ourſelves to no manner of purpoſe---If then we will ſave Europe, if indeed we will ſave England as a free, trading, and proteſtant country, whatever may

be the conſequence, we muſt act with our whole force, both by ſea and land, both in Europe and America.

Frugality, I grant, is a moſt excellent virtue as well in the oeconomy of ſtates, as of private families; but, as the wiſe man has long ſince obſerved, there is a time to ſpend, as well as a time to ſpare; and ſure I am, if ever there was a time to ſpend, 'tis now; when all that ought to be near and dear to us as Men, as Engliſhmen, and as Chriſtians is at ſtake! who does not ſcorn the abject wretch, who when he is in danger of immediate death, cries out there is no need of being at the expence of a phyſician, he has a good conſtitution, has often eſcaped the grave already, is willing to truſt nature, and ſo dies to ſave charges? but ſtill more contemptible are thoſe ſtate-miſers, who, under the plauſible pretence of ſaving the nation's money, will endanger the peace and happineſs of ſo many millions of people.

Surely 'tis our not ſeeing the imminent danger we are expoſed to, the inevitable ruin which attends us, when once Holland ſhall be ſwallow'd up by France, that makes us thus languid in its defence, and thus divided upon the expediency of thoſe active meaſures which are propoſed to ſave it, and which only can ſave it. Could we but once be made thoroughly ſenſible of the ſtrict connection between England and the Low-Countries, that they are indeed its barrier, its outworks, we ſhould think no expence too great in aſſiſting them to maintain their independence, and at the ſame time to ſecure the flame of war, as far as poſſible, from reaching our own doors. Our late terrors and alarms will, I hope, produce thus much benefit to the nation, as to perſuade us to ſpend our money rather in averting dangers, and in preventing them from ever reaching our borders, than in laying it out in endeavouring to free ourſelves

from

from them, after they have once invaded us, and are beginning to diſturb our internal peace and tranquillity. Our ſituation as an iſland gives us in ſome meaſure the advantage of byeſtanders, while others are engaged in the game. Placed as in a watch tower, ſecure from any immediate danger of the battle, which is every where raging around us, we have it in our power to direct the ſtorm to ſee where the neceſſary ſuccours are moſt wanted, and if we act with proper vigour and unanimity, may always be ſure, that our ſuccours will not be altogether ineffectual.

I am not for making romantic conqueſts upon the continent, ſuch as were formerly, as impoliticly as fruitleſsly, propoſed by our Edwards and our Henries; but ſelf-intereſt, yea ſelf-preſervation, I think, commands us ſo far to interfere with the concerns of our neighbours as to endeavour to keep the peace between them, and punctually to fulfil our treaties; to protect the weaker againſt the ſtronger, and ſo equally to maintain the balance of power, as to be courted by them all in their turns, and to ſecure ourſelves (the point we always ought to aim at) an uninterrupted freedom of trading with them all. This has been the conſtant plan upon which our wiſeſt princes have formed their conduct ever ſince the time of Henry VIII, and to their prudent, critical, and vigorous interpoſitions, from time to time, with their potent neighbours on the continent, not only England in particular, but all the reſt of Europe has been more than once obliged for its liberty and independence.

It was upon this plan, after the fatal battle of Pavia, that Henry VIII ſaved both France and Italy from being ſwallowed up by the exorbitant power of the houſe of Auſtria; and by theſe ſame means likewiſe

wiſe, that he afterwards prevented the proteſtant ſtates of Germany from being reduced under the abſolute dominion of their emperor. Charles V had ambition, courage, wiſdom and power enough to have eſtabliſhed that fifth monarchy he was ſo fond of, had he not been quite ſo eager and forward in the purſuit; but by graſping at too much at once, tho' he was generally ſucceſsful in all his particular attempts, he miſcarried in his grand deſign. The weight of the king of England thrown into the French, the Italian, or the German ſcale was always too heavy for him.

Philip II ſteadily purſued the ſame ſcheme of governing and giving laws to Europe, tho' the plan he proceeded upon was ſomewhat different from that of his father. For what the one endeavoured to effect by open war, the other thought might more eaſily be brought about by the cloſe undermining arts of policy. If the valour of the father bordered a little upon Quixotiſm, the wiſdom of the ſon had too much of the fox in it, all his neighbours ſuſpected it, took the alarm, and guarded againſt it. He began by attempting to reduce the Netherlands to his yoke, to an implicit obedience to all his commands. But here again he was prevented by a queen of England, who both openly aſſiſted the poor diſtreſſed States with men and money, and boldly declared herſelf the head of the proteſtant league upon the continent, with the knowledge however, the encouragement, and concurrence of France.

The ſtrict union of France and England at this juncture was too great an obſtacle to Philip's ambition, not to make him endeavour all he could to put an end to it. He therefore raiſes, promotes, and ſupports a faction of his own in France, and had it not been for Engliſh council, Engliſh money, and Engliſh

Engliſh forces, he had indiſputably demoliſhed the French king, and made that ſtate as ſubſervient to his political views, as his own at preſent are to thoſe of France.

England muſt therefore at all events be conquered, as the only power in Europe that was both able and willing to interrupt, to impede, and to ruin the ſucceſs of the Auſtrian ſchemes. This drew on the ſo famous invaſion of eighty eight, which the good providence of God rather than our own ſtrength diſappointed.

Queen Elizabeth's ſucceſſor purſued a very different plan of policy from his predeceſſor. War he ſeemed to have a natural antipathy to; full of his own wiſdom, and conceited of his ſuperior talents, he depended entirely upon negociations; and accordingly his embaſſadors were ſeen parading it in every court of Europe-- but as every court in Europe knew king James's pacific diſpoſition, ſo was he lightly eſteemed, and in his turn duped by them all. His allies diſtruſted and diſregarded him; his enemies, the enemies of the peace of Europe, threatned, cajoled, deſpiſed, and governed him. The conſequence of which was an univerſal diſcontent and uneaſineſs amongſt his own ſubjects, the loſs of the Palatinate and kingdom of Bohemia to his ſon-in-law, a general invaſion of the liberties of the Imperial States, the diſtreſs of the king of Denmark, and a diſſolution of the alliance between England and France.

The mutual and early diſtruſt between Charles I and his own people, prevented England from making any conſiderable figure abroad during the reign of this unhappy prince---But had either he or his miniſters known how to have made a proper uſe of the then-ſituation of Europe, had they at leaſt but taken

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due care to have kept the proteſtant intereſt alive in France, by ſupporting their oppreſſed brethren of that country, as they ought to have done, that nation would never have been ſo potent, and ſo juſtly formidable to all its neighbours, as we feel it to be at preſent.

There are people who pretend to be mighty fond of Oliver Cromwell's ſyſtem of government; and nothing is more common than to hear his ſuperior wiſdom extolled to the ſkies; though, perhaps, after all his political ſkill may be as juſtly dubious, as moſt other parts of that fortunate man's character. However, 'tis evident from his whole conduct after he came to the ſupreme power, that he thought England had ſomething to do with the continent;---tho' if ever there was a time when it might be truly ſaid to have-nothing to do with it, it was during his adminiſtration. For ſo equally ballanced were the ſeveral principal ſtates of Europe at this juncture, Spain and France, the Empire and Holland, that England could really have nothing to fear from any of them, either for herſelf or her allies. Nor ſhould I perhaps be thought to go too far in my aſſertion was I to ſay, that the crown of France owes more to Cromwell's unſeaſonable war with Spain at its requeſt, than it does even to the ſo-much-applauded politics of Richelieu himſelf. It was the weight of England thrown into the French ſcale at that critical point of time which has ever ſince inclined the ballance in its favour.

Charles II, indeed, had he acted as a king of England ought to have done, might have brought matters to their former equality, and once more have reſtored the ballance of power amongſt his neighbours---but inſtead of this, (thro' an infatuation, I think, peculiar to his family) he was continually throwing more

weight

weight into that very ſcale, which already was but too heavy. Whether corrupted with French gold, or thro a fondneſs for that country, whether his unhappy exile had driven him for a refuge. He both oppreſſed his beſt and moſt natural allies the Dutch in two ſea-wars, and calmly ſuffered others to oppreſs them; he paid very little regard to the complaints and diſtreſſes of the Empire at that time invaded by the Turk, and ſeems to have been even well pleaſed, whilſt the Spaniſh-Netherlands were every day ſinking under the encroachments of France---But his people were not thus eaſily blinded and miſled. They clearly ſaw their true intereſt, and moſt eagerly wiſhed to purſue it. They ſtrenuouſly oppoſed the frenchified councils of their King. They addreſſed and voted aſſiſtance to Holland, and a war upon the continent. They readily contributed their money towards carrying it on; and were willing to ſacrifice both their lives and fortunes to ſtop this continual progreſs of the French arms. Their actions, as well as ſpeeches at this time, all convince us, that it was the unbiaſſed opinion of the politicians of thoſe days, that nothing but the vigorous interpoſition of England could ſave either Holland, the Empire, or itſelf from the arms and policy of their common enemy.

The continual murmurs of his ſubjects drew on at laſt a few warm remonſtrances from their king againſt the proceedings of the French, and introduced a ſeries of negotiations between the two courts; but as there were no forces ready to back the diſpatches of our embaſſadors, their complaints, tho' received with all the outward reſpect imaginable, were in reallity laughed at and deſpiſed by the French; they ſtill went on in their own way; conquered as they thought fit, and, when they were a little out of breath, gave peace to their neighbours upon their own conditions.

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The liberty of Europe ſeemed now to have no other dependence than upon the mere good will and forbearance of the French king---the Netherlands were, for the greateſt part, already reduced under the yoke, the Dutch at mercy, the Empire divided in itſelf and exhauſted by its late war with the Turk, and Spain, tho' backed with the wealth of both the Indies, in want of every thing, men, money, and council, and conſequently utterly unable to withſtand the next attempts of their perſevering enemy, which were every day expected. England indeed had formerly ſaved Europe, when much ſuch another dangerous criſis threatened its independence, and the houſe of Auſtria openly attempted a fifth-monarchy---but what hopes, what reaſonable expectations of ſuccour could be raiſed from thence in the preſent unhappy ſituation of that country with James II at its head? a prince in ſtrict alliance with the common adverſary! a prince, who inſtead of defending the liberties of Europe, was every Day undermining and attacking thoſe of his own ſubjects! a prince, whoſe very religion prompted him to wiſh the utter ſubverſion of the whole proteſtant intereſt and its allies! The French therefore might with ſome reaſon expect his concurrence in carrying on their ſchemes, as he in return might want their aid towards the eſtabliſhing his own? but what good could Europe, or even his own people, ever hope for from ſuch a prince?

His ſubjects therefore wiſely foreſeeing the double danger, the immediate danger they were in both of becoming themſelves the ſlaves of their own king, and their country a province of France, very early entered into the beſt meaſures to prevent it. They fly for refuge to the prince of Orange, whoſe near alliance to the crown gave him the beſt title to defend its independence, and whoſe military ſkill,

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and warm zeal for the common cauſe, marked him out as the moſt proper perſon, to ſtem the overbearing torrent of the French ſucceſs. The Dutch were too ſenſible of their own intereſt not to hearken immediately to the cries of their injured and oppreſſed allies; a large fleet is fitted out, an army is landed in England, providence proſpers the glorious attempt, the tyrant abdicates, peace is reſtored, and liberty and religion once more reaſſume their wonted throne in this happy iſland. From this period followed a long and bloody war between Europe and France, with a king of England once more at the head of the grand confederacy.

'Tis ridiculous therefore, yea 'tis highly iniquitous to aſſert, as the manner of ſome amongſt us is, that the war between king William and France was begun merely to ſupport his title, that it was only a diſpute whether he or James ſhould be king of England. If there are any Perſons, who are really ſincere when they ſay this, 'tis no want of charity to tell them, that they know nothing at all of the ſtate of Europe at the time of the Revolution. Would king William have tamely winked at the deſigns of France upon the Netherlands, could he have been perſuaded to have ſtood ſtill, whilſt Holland and the Empire had been attacked by that rapacious Power, no one would have been more forward than Lewis himſelf to have acknowledged his title, and, to have ſtood by him in defence of it; and as it had before happened to his brother Charles II under Mazarin's adminiſtration, the abdicated monarch muſt ſoon have been obliged to have ſought another country to have taken refuge in. It mattered not to Lewis who was king of England, ſo it was one he might depend upon, one who would be ſubſervient to his meaſures, one who would be ready to do, or

not to do, juſt as he would have him. He, who formerly would have made the prince of Orange king of that country, the more eaſily to have reduced Holland to his dependence, would as little have ſcrupled to have oppoſed the Stewarts, and to have maintained him in quiet poſſeſſion of the kingdom of England, had he thought he could have obliged him to a neutrality thereby, and made him a little more in the French intereſt.

I readily allow therefore, that the tedious war which enſued between France and England, was entirely in conſequence of the Revolution. For had it not been for that great, that critical and important event, the whole Netherlands, and even Holland itſelf, had long ſince been ſwallowed up by their overgrown neighbour, and we ourſelves had ſunk with them without ſo much as having fought a ſingle battle for our liberty and religion. Give me leave therefore once more to aſſert, nor can it be too frequently repeated, that had not England vigorouſly interpoſed, as it did, under that heroic prince, whoſe memory ought ever to be dear to it, had it not largely diſtributed its wealth amongſt the exhauſted ſtates of Germany, had it not ſent its well-reſolved armies to fight its battles upon the continent, all Europe had by this time groaned under the oppreſſions of thoſe mighty armies; which were every where ſeeking to overturn its independance; eſpecially as France, at this juncture, was much more powerful by ſea than it is at preſent, and indeed a match for the combined fleets of both England and Holland. I grant indeed, theſe glorious and ſucceſsful efforts coſt us immenſe ſums of money, as well as a great deal of blood, and that we even yet ſuffer under the debt contracted at that time---but let us grant likewiſe, what is equally true, that this blood was

ſpilt

ſpilt and this debt contracted, (not to oppoſe the family of the Stewarts, but) in defence of our own, and the common ſafety of Europe. For that we have any trade, any liberty left us at home, any honour and credit abroad, that we have the free exerciſe of the proteſtant religion amongſt us, is entirely owing to king William's wars upon the continent--- We at this day enjoy the benefit of the great actions, which were then performed, and therefore if ſome ſmall ſhare of the burthen likewiſe be thrown upon us, we ought to be the more eaſy and patient under it.

The acceſſion of Spain to the Houſe of Bourbon, upon the death of Charles II, was ſuch a vaſt accumulation of power, as once more juſtly alarmed all Europe. For if France was really formidable to all its neighbours, and hardly to be contained within the bounds of moderation, before this great event, what was not to be feared from its activity and perfidy, when ſupported in its pretenſions by the whole power of Spain and the Indies? Theſe conſiderations, as in true policy they ought, ſoon drew on another general confederacy, the end of which was, to hinder, if poſſible, theſe two potent kingdoms from ever coming both into the ſame family.

As to England, the whole nation, at this time, plainly ſaw its true intereſt, and were for vigorouſly purſuing it. Nor was there, I believe, a ſingle unprejudiced man in the kingdom, either in the parliament or out of it, who was not for entering into the ſtricteſt alliance with Holland and the Empire to prevent the fatal effects, which were ſo juſtly dreaded from the exorbitant, and ſtill increaſing power of France. The man, who had ventured at this juncture to have diſſuaded our entering into the war, or to have publickly aſked the queſtion, what has this iſland to do with the continent, would have been undoubtedly

undoubtedly looked upon as a Papiſt in his heart, or as a bigotted Jacobite---Here then was no Dutch intereſt to ſway our politics, as was iniquitouſly ſaid of the former reign; here was no Hanoverian rudder, as ſome people at preſent are fond of terming it, to ſteer the Engliſh veſſel; but we had a princeſs at the head of our councils *with a heart entirely Engliſh* as ſhe expreſſes it herſelf, and no foreign bias to miſlead her---and yet the whole nation was unanimous, that our preſervation, our very being depended upon our ſtrict union with Holland and Germany, and that, unleſs we entered into the war with our whole force, by land as well as ſea, all muſt neceſſarily ſink under the heavy yoke the French were preparing for them.

Our expences are proportionate to the greatneſs of the danger that threatned us, and the end we propoſed; the national debt ſtill goes on encreaſing, whilſt our armies are bravely, and ſucceſsfully engaged upon the continent (not to keep out a weak Pretender from reigning over us, but) in ſupport of the independence of Europe, and in defence of our own liberty and religion---and we had effectually carried our point, we had completely ſecured both, not only for the preſent but even for ſucceeding generations, had we not baſely given out when we did; had we continued true to our own intereſts and to our repeated engagements with our allies; had we not ſuffered ourſelves to have been gulled and deceived by a ſett of patriots, who under the ſpecious pretence of ſaving the money of the nation, moſt vilely betrayed it to the intereſts of France and a popiſh Pretender.

Ever ſince the fatal peace of Utrecht France has been continually encreaſing in trade, in wealth, in power; ſo that ſcarcely ever was there a time perhaps, when it was more truly formidable than upon

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the breaking out of the war which now threatens Europe---I am not at all concerned to know by what means they acquired this power, whether by the ill conduct of their neighbours, or by their own ſuperior induſtry, skill, and policy. The fact is all I am contending for, and that, I think, is indiſputable, is confeſſed on all hands. If, indeed, the blundering politics of former miniſters have contributed to the aggrandizement of our enemies, by omitting the proper opportunities of diſtreſſing their commerce, and diſuniting them from their allies---how are we to act at preſent? are we alſo to join in theſe weak meaſures, and to perſiſt in ſtrengthening our adverſary's hands? or ought we not rather to amend what has been formerly amiſs, and to correct in ourſelves what we condemn in others?

The late Earl of O-----d has been frequently, and with much virulence, accuſed for ſuffering the French to grow ſo great during his being at the head of our public affairs---Be it ſo! we will even ſuppoſe, that he well deſerves all that blame, which his enemies have thrown upon him on this ſcore! for I am not at all concerned to defend him----But who are the men, who more eſpecially abuſe and condemn his conduct? are they not the very perſons, who now ridicule, and ſo vehemently declame againſt a war upon the continent? who ſo ſtrenuouſly, both in the Houſe and out of it, oppoſe every vigorous meaſure which is propoſed to humble and depreſs this ſtill-encreaſing power of France? If then, in the opinion of theſe Gentlemen, the Earl of O------d was ſo notoriouſly in the wrong, and deſerved ſo very ill of the nation, for not preventing the French from becoming thus great and formidable; ſurely our preſent Miniſters are entirely in the right, and purſuing the true intereſt of their country, who take

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every ſtep, and exert every nerve of government to reduce this exorbitant power within more moderate limits----both adminiſtrations, 'tis certain, they cannot think wrong; yet we find them, with their uſual conſiſtency, equally oppoſing both: where then are their principles, and upon what motives may we ſuppoſe they act? we may fairly conclude, that the real good of their country, notwithſtanding all their clamour, is very little at their heart.

Let us not then, my Countrymen, ſuffer ourſelves to be amuſed with the idle tales of ſuch as lie in wait to deceive, merely for ſome gainful and vindictive purpoſe of their own. The war we are engaged in with France is entirely Engliſh. It was begun upon Engliſh principles, and will, I truſt, be vigorouſly carried on upon the ſame. 'Tis not, as ſome of you have been ſeduced to believe, whether this or that king ſhall reign over us, but whether we ſhall ſtill continue to exiſt as a free, trading, independent and proteſtant nation. By every law therefore of God, of nature and of nations, we and our allies have a right (and I hope we ſhall make a proper uſe of it) to riſe up with an unalterable reſolution to reduce the power of that arrogant kingdom to ſuch reaſonable bounds, as to be no longer formidable to its neighbours. For our own part, as the late repetition of their intolerable inſults ſeems at preſent to have rendered us unanimous, at leaſt in reſentment; I hope we ſhall never prevail upon ourſelves to give them peace, till we have ſtripped them of thoſe inſtruments with which they have ſo often attempted to invade and to enſlave us; till not a French ſhip of twenty guns dares appear on the ocean. Acts of fortitude in defence of our liberties, our country or allies, are entitled to all the praiſes we can give them; but thoſe ſons of violence, who

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ſet up for arbitrators and diſpoſers of kingdoms, are the plagues of the earth, the monſtrous devourers of their own ſpecies, and every hand ought to be lifted up in vengeance againſt them.

The preſent opportunity ſeems to be critical in our favour, and to invite even the moſt deſpairing amongſt us to hope, to action, and to perſeverance. Our inteſtine troubles are happily fled into that gloomy and remote corner of the iſland, which firſt gave them birth, and where they can be no longer dangerous to the public ſafety. Our late ſucceſſes at ſea have not only greatly diſtreſſed our enemies, but at the ſame time ſecured a very conſiderable branch of our old trade, and opened new funds of wealth to the adventurous merchant. The Dutch, ſenſible at laſt of their impending ruin, implore our protection, and are ready to enter into any meaſures we may propoſe for the general good. By his Majeſty's wiſdom and indefatigable pains the head of the Empire is entirely in our intereſt, as by his moderation and ſeaſonable interpoſition peace is once more reſtored to the whole Germanic-body, and thoſe civil diſſentions happily extinguiſhed, which have hitherto prevented the ſeveral States of thoſe vaſt regions from acting vigorouſly againſt the common enemy, and repaying their inſidious adverſary for all that bloodſhed, ruin and devaſtation, which he has wrought amongſt them. The King of Sardinia ſtill bravely holds his enemies at bay, nor will that ſecond branch of the houſe of Bourbon be ever able to take faſt root in Italy if this heroic prince be as ſtrongly ſupported by his allies, as his invincible courage deſerves. To crown the whole, we have a General of our own, whoſe high-birth gives him an indiſputable title to be placed at the head of the confederacy, whoſe undaunted courage has been

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tried in the bloody fields of Dettingen and Fontenoy, whoſe military capacity we all confidently rely upon, and whoſe quick and ſurpriſing ſucceſs in freeing his own country from thoſe heavy chains, which rebellion was preparing for it, is, I hope, a happy omen of thoſe future triumphs which he will one day enjoy, for having delivered Europe from the inſolent and ambitious attempts of France.

What a fortunate conjuncture is this, and what advantages may we not reaſonably expect from it, if it be properly purſued, if it be puſhed with all that vigour, ſteadineſs, and unanimity, which the great occaſion calls for? However potent the houſe of Bourbon may be, however plentiful in its reſources, we know by frequent experience, that 'tis neither inexhauſtable nor invincible, that, like all other ſubſidiary powers, it muſt yield at laſt to ſuperior force. Whilſt England and Holland, the Empire and King of Sardinia continue firmly united, and true to each other's intereſt, 'tis impoſſible but France muſt ſink under the weight of ſo many potent enemies, and be reduced to accept of ſuch terms as the high allies ſhall think proper to impoſe upon it, as well for their future as their preſent ſecurity---'Tis then, and not before, that we ſhall receive and enjoy the reward of all our blood ſpilt, and treaſure laid out in the cauſe of Europe in an extended and uninterrupted commerce, in a ſafe, honourable, and laſting general peace.

FINIS.